

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated October 22, 2004, the Examiner objected to claims 19 and 23 under 37 CFR § 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate of claim 14. The Examiner rejected claims 17 and 21, under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, alleging that these claims are indefinite. The Examiner rejected claims 14, 16, 17, and 19-21, under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, alleging that the specification, while being enabling for treating pain, does not provide enablement for treating all other listed diseases.

This response addresses each of the Examiner's objections and rejections. Accordingly, the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration of all pending claims is therefore respectfully requested.

Applicants have amended claims 1, 14, 16, 20, and 21, and have canceled claims 15, 17-19 and 23 without prejudice. Applicants reserve the right to file continuing applications directed toward the deleted subject matter.

The Examiner objected to claims 19 and 23 under 37 CFR § 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate of claim 14. Although Applicants do not believe that the objected to claims are identical, Applicants have cancelled claims 19 and 23 without prejudice for the purposes of expediting prosecution. Accordingly, this objection is rendered moot by way of this amendment. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection.

The Examiner rejected claims 17 and 21, under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, alleging that these claims are indefinite. Specifically, the Examiner is alleging that the specification does not set forth any steps involved in determining how to identify "a

disorder or condition, the treatment or prevention of which can be effected or facilitated by modulating binding to opioid receptors in a mammal”.

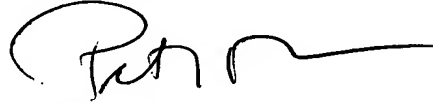
In response, and solely for purposes of expediting prosecution, Applicants have cancelled claim 17 and have amended claim 21 to change this claim from a method “for treating a disorder or condition, the treatment of which can be effected or facilitated by modulating binding to opioid receptors” to a method of modulating binding to opioid receptors. Accordingly, this amendment renders this rejection moot and removes the Examiner’s requirement to have support in the specification that identifies a disorder or condition, the treatment or prevention of which can be effected or facilitated by modulating binding to opioid receptors in a mammal. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

The Examiner rejected claims 14, 16, 17, and 19-21, under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, alleging that the specification, while being enabling for treating pain, does not provide enablement for treating all other listed diseases. Applicants respectfully disagree.

It is known to one skilled in the art that opioid antagonists play a modulatory role in the treatment in disorders of food intake, shock, constipation, mental disorders, CNS injury, alcoholism, and immune function. See P.S. Portoghese et al., J. Med. Chem., Vol 34: 1757-1762, 1991). In addition, U.S. Patent No. 6,136,817, discloses and claims that opioid receptor antagonist compounds can be used for suppressing the rejection of organ transplants and for suppressing rheumatic disease. Accordingly, these references demonstrate that opioid receptor antagonists, in general, are useful for treating the diseases listed in claims 14, 16, 17, and 19-21, and similar diseases. Therefore, these claims are enabled to one skilled in the art. A copy of these two references are enclosed herein for the Examiner’s convenience.

Thus, in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the application is in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter I. Bernstein', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peter I. Bernstein
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 43,497

Scully, Scott, Murphy & Presser
400 Garden City Plaza, Suite 300
Garden City, New York 11530
516-742-4343

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JOURNAL OF MEDICINAL CHEMISTRY

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Volume 34, Number 6

June 1991

Medicinal Chemistry Award Address

An Approach to the Design of Receptor-Type-Selective Non-Peptide Antagonists of Peptidergic Receptors: δ Opioid Antagonists[†]

Philip S. Portoghese

Department of Medicinal Chemistry, College of Pharmacy, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455.
Received February 7, 1991

Introduction

Rather than presenting a survey of research conducted in my laboratory over the years, I would like to discuss a subject of current interest—the design of selective peptidomimetic ligands. Interest in peptidomimetics is reflected by the increasing frequency of publications on this subject and the fact that it is one of the topics at this symposium.¹

I am aware there are many definitions of peptidomimetics. For the purpose of this lecture, I define peptidomimetics as non-peptide ligands that are recognized by peptide recognition sites. This broad definition includes a range of structural classes of compounds—from alkaloids that bear little resemblance to peptides to non-peptides with a closer structural relationship to endogenous peptides. As this definition focuses on recognition rather than function, it includes both agonists and antagonists.

Because peptides are metabolically labile and have problems being orally absorbed, the design of peptidomimetics is being actively pursued in many laboratories. There are a number of non-peptide drugs now in clinical use that are known to interact with peptide recognition sites. I would guess that as our knowledge base of receptors and enzymes expands, the number of known drugs classified as peptidomimetics will increase.

A number of peptidomimetics that bear only a remote structural resemblance to the native peptide have been synthesized.¹ Invariably these have come from natural products or from synthetic compounds uncovered in screening programs, as it is not clear how such peptidomimetics are recognized by peptide recognition sites. The crux of the problem is that in most cases medicinal

chemists are handicapped by the lack of detailed information on the molecular structure of the peptide recognition sites. What is promising, however, is the fact that relatively small non-peptide molecules can be recognized by sites that bind larger endogenous peptides.² This suggests that it may be possible ultimately to design small non-peptide molecules as receptor antagonists or agonists.

In this lecture I present some of our recent efforts to design δ -selective opioid receptor antagonists. Perhaps some of the principles discussed here may have sufficient generality to be useful in the design of non-peptides for peptidergic recognition sites other than those located on opioid receptors.

Multiple Opioid Receptors

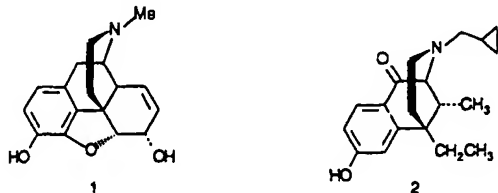
The concept of multiple opioid receptors emanated from two convergent lines of research. The proposal for multiple receptors and multiple modes of interaction of ligands with opioid receptors was originally suggested on the basis of structure-activity analysis of several series of opioid agonists.^{3,4} This was followed by pharmacological studies which led to a detailed framework for this concept.⁵⁻¹⁰

- (1) Morgan, B. A.; Gainor, J. A. Approaches to the Discovery of Non-Peptide Ligands for Peptide Receptors and Peptidases. *Annu. Rep. Med. Chem.* 1989, 24, 243-252.
- (2) A classical example is morphine which can mimic the effect of the 31 amino acid opioid peptide β -endorphin, at a common recognition site. See: Yamashiro, D.; Li, C. H. β -Endorphin: Structure and Activity. In *The Peptides*; Udenfriend, S., Meienhofer, J., Eds.; Academic Press: New York, 1984; Vol. 6, pp 191-217.
- (3) Portoghese, P. S. A New Concept on the Mode of Interaction of Narcotic Analgesics with Receptors. *J. Med. Chem.* 1965, 8, 609-616.
- (4) Portoghese, P. S. Stereochemical Factors and Receptor Interactions Associated with Narcotic Analgesics. *J. Pharm. Sci.* 1966, 55, 865-887.
- (5) Martin, W. R. Opioid Antagonists. *Pharmacol. Rev.* 1967, 19, 463-521.

[†]This is in part taken from the text of the Medicinal Chemistry Award Address delivered on July 30, 1990 at the 22nd National Medicinal Chemistry Symposium, July 29-August 3, Austin, Texas.

Presently, there are a minimum of three major opioid receptor types (μ , κ , δ) that are involved in the modulation of a variety of physiological effects via interaction with opioid peptides.¹¹ The opioid peptides enkephalin and dynorphin are believed to be the endogenous ligands for δ and κ receptors, respectively. A mammalian opioid peptide that is selective for μ receptors has not yet been identified.

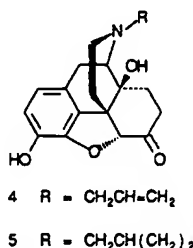
A variety of non-peptide opioid agonist ligands are known to be selective for μ - or for κ -receptors. Among these, morphine (1) and ethylketazocine (2) are proto-



typical ligands that are selective for μ and κ sites, respectively. Various enkephalin analogues are selective for δ receptors. These include [D-Ala²,D-Leu⁵]enkephalin (3, DADLE) and later generations of more selective synthetic enkephalin-related peptides. Highly selective opioid agonists for all three sites are now known.¹²

Opioid Antagonists as Pharmacological Tools

Opioid antagonists have been indispensable as tools in opioid research.¹² In fact, the chief criterion for the classification of an agonist effect as being opioid receptor-mediated is the ability of naloxone (4) or naltrexone



(5) to reversibly antagonize this effect in a competitive fashion. The usefulness of naloxone and naltrexone for this purpose stems from the fact that they are universal opioid antagonists; that is, they are capable of antagonizing

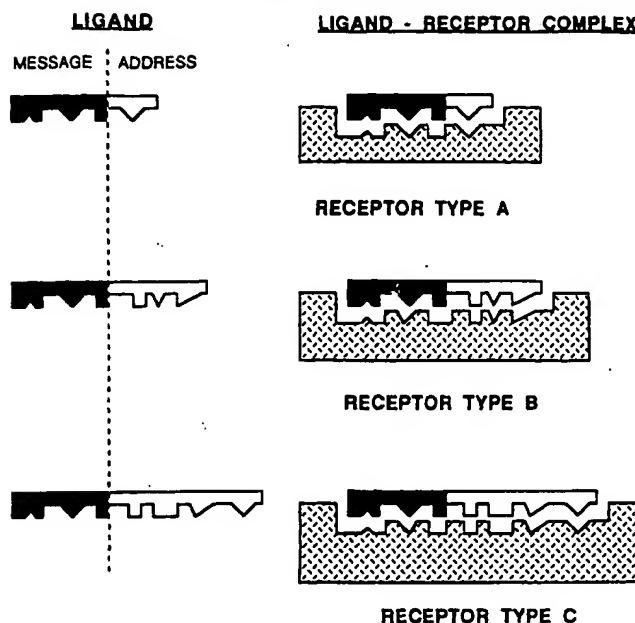


Figure 1. A cartoon of the message-address concept as a basis for the selectivity of a family of synchologically organized peptides.

the agonist effects mediated by multiple opioid receptor types.

Since it is now firmly established that there are a minimum of three opioid receptor types, it has become increasingly evident that selective opioid antagonists are valuable pharmacological tools for identifying receptor types involved in the interaction with opioid agonists. One of the major advantages of selective opioid antagonists over selective agonists is their utility in probing the interaction of endogenous opioid peptides and new opioid agonists with opioid receptor types. Moreover, since it is sometimes not easy to distinguish among μ , δ , and κ opioid receptor mediated agonist effects if the pharmacological endpoints are identical (e.g., antinociception or inhibition of a smooth muscle preparation by agonists), selective antagonists clearly have wider utility as tools than selective agonists.

An aspect of selective antagonists that deserves mention is that their general utility as pharmacological tools depends upon the correlation of in vitro with in vivo activity. This can be accomplished more easily with non-peptide ligands because they generally can penetrate the blood-brain barrier and therefore can be administered peripherally in vivo. Also, they are less subject to metabolism than are peptides.

In addition to their uses as pharmacological tools, selective, non-peptide opioid antagonists may have potential clinical applications in the treatment of a variety of disorders where endogenous opioids play a modulatory role. These include food intake, shock, constipation, immune function, behavior, CNS injury, and alcoholism.¹³

The Message-Address Model in the Design of Selective Non-Peptide Opioid Antagonists

The rationale for the design of such compounds was based on the message-address model which was employed by Schwyzner¹⁴ to analyze structure-activity relationships of ACTH and related peptide hormones. Accordingly, peptide hormones are termed "synchologic" if their information content is organized so that the "message" and

- (6) Takemori, A. E.; Kupferberg, H. J.; Miller, J. W. Quantitative Studies of the Antagonism of Morphine by Nalorphine and Naloxone. *J. Pharmacol. Exp. Ther.* 1969, 169, 39-45.
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- (8) Martin, W. R.; Eades, C. G.; Thompson, J. A.; Huppler, R. E.; Gilbert, P. E. The Effects of Morphine- and Nalorphine-Like Drugs in the Nondependent and Morphine-Dependent Chronic Spinal Dog. *J. Pharmacol. Exp. Ther.* 1976, 197, 517-533.
- (9) Gilbert, P. E.; Martin, W. R. The Effects of Morphine and Nalorphine-Like Drugs in the Nondependent, Morphine-Dependent and Cyclazocine-Dependent Chronic Spinal Dog. *J. Pharmacol. Exp. Ther.* 1976, 198, 66-82.
- (10) Lord, J. A. H.; Waterfield, A. A.; Hughes, J.; Kosterlitz, H. W. Endogenous Opioid Peptides: Multiple Agonists and Receptors. *Nature* 1977, 267, 495-499.
- (11) Herz, A. The Multiplicity of Opioid Receptors and Their Functional Significance. In *Trends in Medicinal Chemistry*; Mutschler, E., Wintefeldt, E., Eds., VCH Verlagsgesellschaft: Weinheim, 1987; pp 337-350.
- (12) Zimmerman, D. M.; Leander, J. D. Selective Opioid Receptor Agonists and Antagonists: Research Tools and Potential Therapeutic Agents. *J. Med. Chem.* 1990, 33, 895-902.

(13) Olson, G. A.; Olson, R. D.; Kastin, A. J. Endogenous Opiates: 1987. *Peptides* 1989, 10, 205-236.

(14) Schwyzner, R. ACTH: A Short Introductory Review. *Ann. N.Y. Acad. Sci.* 1977, 297, 3-26.

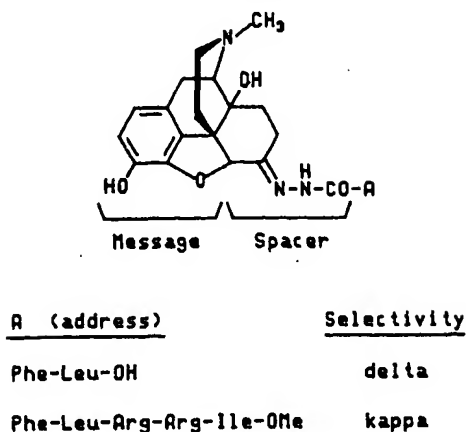


Figure 2. Hybrid structures consisting of an opiate (message) and a peptide (address).

"address" components are proximal to one another in the peptide chain. The message component is required for triggering signal transduction at the receptor site; the address confers additional binding affinity and is not essential for the transduction process.

A cartoon to illustrate the concept, as applied to a family of receptor types (Figure 1), depicts each receptor type as having two subsites. These are (1) a message subsite which is similar or invariant for all of the receptor types and (2) an address subsite that is unique for each receptor type.

It was pointed out by Chavkin and Goldstein¹⁵ that the endogenous opioid peptides conform to the message-address model; i.e., they contain a constant tetrapeptide sequence, Tyr-Gly-Gly-Phe, which can be viewed as the message, and a variable sequence which may serve as an address to confer selectivity for a receptor type.

A modified interpretation of the message-address model, as applied to opioid peptides, is that the Tyr¹ residue comprises the message component and the sequence starting with Phe⁴ constitutes the address; in this context, Gly²-Gly³ serves as a spacer to connect the message and address elements. This is consistent with the well-known structure-activity relationships of non-peptide opioid ligands (e.g., morphine) that contain only one aromatic ring which presumably mimics the Tyr¹ residue.

This model was tested by the attachment of the address segments of leucine-enkephalin and dynorphin to oxymorphone, which contains a non-peptide message component (Figure 2).¹⁶ The binding data revealed that a typically μ -selective ligand such as oxymorphone was transformed to a δ -selective ligand simply by attachment of the " δ address" (Phe-Leu) of leucine-enkephalin through a spacer to the C-6 position of the opiate. Similarly, a κ -selective ligand was obtained by attachment of a segment of the " κ address" (Phe-Leu-Arg-Arg-Ile-OMe) that is common to the endogenous κ -selective agonist dynorphin A.

These studies suggested that feasibility of developing non-peptide, δ -selective opioid antagonists by the attachment of a non-peptide moiety to an opiate structure in order to mimic a key recognition element in the address. Although the message-address concept was proposed for endogenous agonists, it could serve as a useful model for the design of selective antagonists as well, if such ligands

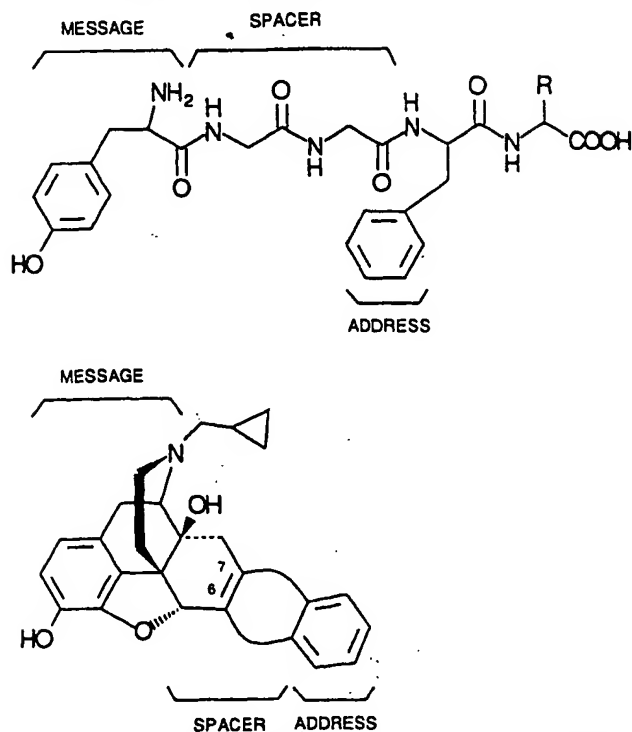


Figure 3. An approach to the design of a non-peptide δ -selective opioid antagonist based upon the message-address concept. The message and address components of the δ -selective peptide enkephalin (upper) are compared with those in an opiate (lower).

interact with the same message and address subsites of the receptor site.

The information content of the address is encoded by the amino acid sequence and its conformational constraints. The latter, which can be considered to be a hidden part of the address, determines the facility with which the address adapts conformationally in binding to an address subsite. The conformational mobility of the opioid peptides may contribute to their cross-recognition of opioid receptor types. This might occur by conformational adaption of the flexible peptide to the address subsite during the binding process, and it may provide a plausible explanation for the relatively low binding selectivity of the endogenous opioid peptides.¹⁷

Design Strategy for δ Opioid Antagonists

A strategy for the design of non-peptide, δ -selective antagonists was to employ a naltrexone-derived structure for the message moiety and a key element of the leucine-enkephalin δ address component.¹⁸ This element, which was hypothesized to be the benzene moiety of Phe⁴, was fused to the morphinan structure of naltrexone through a rigid spacer. The relationship of the functional components of the non-peptide to leucine-enkephalin is illustrated in Figure 3. The spacer should restrict the conformation of the benzene moiety (δ address mimic), and it was hoped that this would enhance δ selectivity by precluding conformational adaption of the address to subsites of non- δ opioid receptors.

The first target compound contained a pyrrole spacer because it was easily accessible from naltrexone in a single

- (15) Chavkin, C.; Goldstein, A. Specific Receptor for the Opioid Peptide Dynorphin. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* 1981, 78, 6543-6547.
- (16) Lipkowski, A. W.; Tam, S. W.; Portoghese, P. S. Peptides as Receptor Selectivity Modulators of Opiate Pharmacophores. *J. Med. Chem.* 1986, 29, 1222-1225.

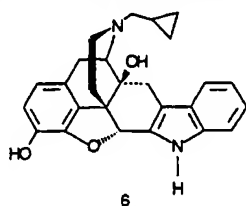
- (17) Hruby, V. J.; Gehrig, C. A. Recent Developments in the Design of Receptor Specific Opioid Peptides. *Med. Res. Rev.* 1989, 9, 343-401.
- (18) Portoghese, P. S.; Sultana, M.; Takemori, A. E. Design of Peptidomimetic δ Opioid Receptor Antagonists Using the Message-Address Concept. *J. Med. Chem.* 1990, 33, 1714-1720.

Table I.^a Comparison of the Antagonist Potency^b and Affinity^c of NTI (6) with Those of Other Antagonists

antagonist	antagonism					binding				
	K_b , ^d nM			K_b selectivity ratio		K_i , nM			K_i selectivity ratio	
	δ	μ	κ	μ/δ	κ/δ	δ	μ	κ	μ/δ	κ/δ
6 (NTI)	0.13	29	45	223	346	0.031	3.8	332	127	11066
8 (NTB)	0.27	27	48	100	178	0.013	19	152	1450	11700
7 (ICI174864)	69	>1667	>1250	>24	>18	35	>1000	>1000	>29	>29
5 (naltrexone)	32	1.0	5.5	0.04	0.17	36	0.8	20	0.02	0.6

^a These data are taken from ref 18 and 22. ^b Tested on the guinea pig ileum preparation using agonists 1 (μ) and 2 (κ) and on the mouse vas deferens preparation using agonist 3 (δ). ^c Binding was conducted on guinea pig brain membranes. ^d K_b = [antagonist]/(IC₅₀ ratio - 1).

synthetic step via the Fischer indole synthesis. This permitted quick access to the target compound in order to test the model. The target compound, naltrindole (6,

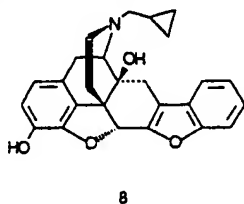


NTI), was the first reported^{19,20} non-peptide δ opioid receptor antagonist. The in vitro δ antagonist potency is about 500 times greater than the δ -selective enkephalin analogue 7 [(allyl)₂Tyr-Aib-Aib-Phe-Leu-OH,²¹ ICI174864]. In terms of binding, NTI has over a 1000-fold greater affinity than 7 (Table I).¹⁸ The profound effect of the address moiety in NTI is also demonstrated by its 240-fold greater δ antagonist potency over its precursor, naltrexone (5).

The high antagonist potency and binding selectivity of NTI 6 are related to its greatly increased affinity for δ sites and to decreased affinity for non- δ opioid sites. This suggested that the benzene moiety of the indole system of NTI confers selectivity by binding to a part of the δ address subsite while hindering binding to other opioid receptor types.

Structure-Activity Relationship Studies

It is noteworthy that an NTI analogue 8 (NTB) which contains an isosteric spacer to hold the benzene moiety in the same orientation as NTI was also δ -selective, but with



somewhat lower antagonist potency (Table I).²² This benzofuran compound 8, however, possessed greater affinity for δ sites relative to that of NTI, and it also pos-

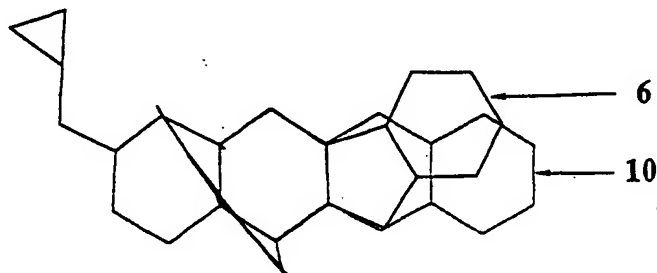
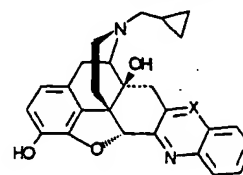


Figure 4. Superposition of NTI (6) with its quinoxaline analogue (10).

sessed greater binding selectivity. A possible reason for the lack of correlation between δ antagonist potency and binding may be related to the possible presence of δ receptor subtypes.²³

Analogues that contain quinoline (9) or quinoxaline (10) ring systems replacing the indole of NTI were less potent δ antagonists and had lower affinity for δ sites than NTI or NTB.²² This may be due to the geometry of the spacers

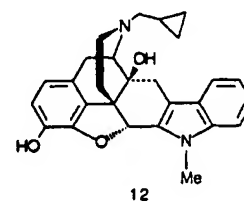
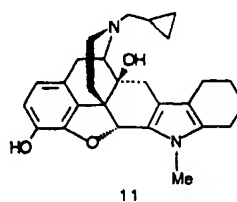


9 X = CH

10 X = N

as they are six-membered rather than five-membered rings. As illustrated by the superposed structures (Figure 4), this orients the benzene moiety differently, thereby leading to lower affinity at the δ site and increased affinity at other sites.

Since it has been reported²⁴ that enkephalin analogues that contain a hexahydro-Phe⁴ residue are less potent as opioid antagonists, we synthesized the tetrahydroindole analogue 11 to determine whether a similar relationship



- (19) Portoghesi, P. S.; Sultana, M.; Nagase, H.; Takemori, A. E. Application of the Message-Address Concept in the Design of Highly Potent and Selective Non-Peptide δ Opioid Receptor Antagonists. *J. Med. Chem.* 1988, 31, 281-282.
- (20) Portoghesi, P. S.; Sultana, M.; Takemori, A. E. Naltrindole, a Highly Potent Non-Peptide δ Opioid Receptor Antagonist. *Eur. J. Pharmacol.* 1988, 146, 185-188.
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- (24) Audigier, Y.; Mazarguil, H.; Gout, R.; Cros, J. Structure-Activity Relationship of Enkephalin Analogs at Opiate and Enkephalin Receptors: Correlation with Analgesia. *Eur. J. Pharmacol.* 1980, 63, 35-46.

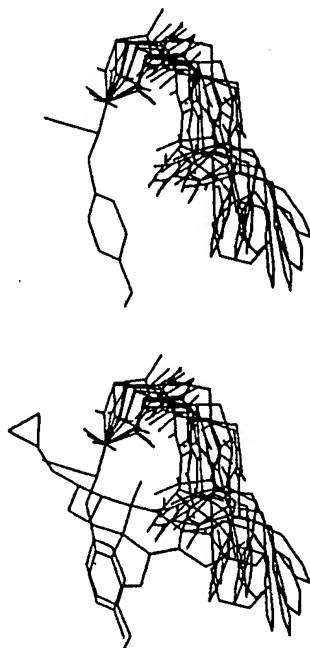


Figure 5. The conformations (at 0.5-ps intervals) of leucine-enkephalin derived from molecular dynamics simulations (300 K) during a 5-ps period in which the tyramine moiety of Tyr¹ has been fixed in a conformation identical with that of NTI (6) (upper illustration). Superposition of the tyramine moiety of 6 with that of enkephalin (lower) illustrates that there is overlap of conformational space occupied by the Phe⁴ phenyl group and the indolic benzene moiety.

exists with NTI-related compounds.²² The opioid antagonist profile of 11 was compared with that of *N*-methyl-NTI (12), which is a potent δ antagonist. The finding that 12 was 9-fold more potent than 11 is consistent with the role of the benzene moiety as a mimic of the phenyl group of Phe⁴ in enkephalin.

It is noteworthy that 11 was apparently as δ -selective as its indole counterpart 12 despite its lower antagonist potency.²² This illustrates an important point concerning the design of selective ligands; namely, that a concomitant proportional decline in the potency at all three receptor types can afford a highly-selective ligand.

Conformational Relationship between NTI and Enkephalin

Molecular dynamics simulations were consistent with the idea that the Phe⁴ of enkephalin and the indolic benzene moiety of NTI both bind to a common δ address subsite. The simulations of leucine enkephalin were carried out with the tyramine moiety of Tyr¹ immobilized in a conformation identical with that in the opiate structure; the remainder of the peptide was unrestrained (Figure 5).²² This approach was taken in an effort to simulate a postulated zipper-type mechanism for binding of the peptide to the δ site. The zipper²⁵ model was employed because it offered a more reasonable alternative for the receptor binding of flexible peptides than a lock-and-key mechanism. This is because the conformational energy differences for amino acid residues generally are small. Thus, leucine-enkephalin was envisaged to undergo nucleation of Tyr¹ at the message subsite of the δ recognition site followed by binding of the Phe⁴ residue with a δ address subsite. The initial binding of the Tyr¹ residue was considered a reasonable assumption in view of the critical

requirement of a protonated basic nitrogen in enkephalin and the fact that counterions are capable of attraction over greater distances than other types of interactions. The stepwise binding was envisaged to be accompanied by sequential conformational changes of the enkephalin residues leading to the fully bound ligand. Presumably, mutual conformational changes of the recognition site also occur during this process.

The results of these simulations showed that the conformational space occupied by the phenyl group of Phe⁴ was restricted to the region of the indolic benzene moiety of NTI (Figure 5). The stability of the bent leucine-enkephalin backbone is consistent with the reported²⁸ conformational studies of δ -selective enkephalins and related peptides. This conformation may permit binding of the indolic benzene moiety to a locus of the δ address subsite that binds Phe⁴ of enkephalin. However, it is unlikely that the Phe⁴ phenyl group would conformationally adapt to an orientation identical with that of the indolic benzene moiety because complete superposition of both rings was not observed during the 300 K simulation. One possibility in this regard is that NTI stabilizes the δ receptor in an antagonist conformational state that is different from that in the agonist state. This could be a manifestation of different conformational requirements for agonists and antagonists.

Is There a Well-Defined Relationship between Selectivity and Affinity?

The fact that both NTI 6 and 7 (ICI174864) are highly δ -selective but differ dramatically in potency deserves comment, since opioid receptor type selectivity has been employed, on occasion, as a criterion for fit at a target receptor. There are basically two different ways in which enhanced selectivity may arise upon molecular modification. First, the modification may afford very large decreases in affinity for sites other than the target site, as is the case with the enkephalin analogue 7. Alternately, the modification may lead to greatly enhanced affinity for the target site, with smaller affinity changes for other sites, as exemplified by NTI 6. These examples clearly illustrate that there is no relationship between selectivity and affinity for the target site.

Ligands that fall into the first category should not be employed as models to study the topography of the target site because their selectivity is derived from unfavorable interactions with other sites. On the other hand, compounds that fit into the second category may be better suited for modeling the target site, as it is more likely that the high selectivity in this case reflects specific interactions that enhance molecular recognition.

Summary and Conclusion

Approaches to the design of peptidomimetic ligands are currently of great interest because of the discovery of an

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increasing number of endogenous peptides that modulate physiological processes. The inherent lability of peptides and their poor oral absorption have made peptidomimetics attractive targets for drug development.

In this presentation I have discussed the design of a novel series of δ -selective opioid antagonists based on the message-address concept. The opioid peptides can be viewed to contain two elements: an essential message component that is recognized by the receptor subsite responsible for the signal transduction process and an address element that is recognized by a subsite that is unique to a single receptor type and functions to enhance binding to the site. Since the tyramine moiety in opiate structures

is known to be important for activity, an identical element in Tyr¹ of the opioid peptides can be viewed as the message. A key moiety of the δ address was considered to be the phenyl group of Phe⁴. Combining the universal opioid antagonist naltrexone (5) with a strategically located address mimic afforded naltrindole (6, NTI), the first non-peptide δ opioid receptor antagonist.

Acknowledgment. The research described in this address was supported by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. I thank my co-workers who were involved with this project; they are listed as my coauthors on the papers cited in this account.

Articles

Dexamethasone 21-(β -Isothiocyanatoethyl) Thioether: A New Affinity Label for Glucocorticoid Receptors

Susana Lopez[†] and S. Stoney Simons, Jr.*

Steroid Hormones Section, NIDDK/LAC, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland 20892.

Received September 17, 1990

The C-21 methanesulfonate ester of the synthetic glucocorticoid dexamethasone (Dex) is an efficient electrophilic affinity label of glucocorticoid receptors and exhibits irreversible antiglucocorticoid activity. In an effort to obtain other affinity labeling steroids with differing biological activities, several new derivatives of Dex were prepared which contained a reactive electrophilic substituent at various distances from the C-21 position. All compounds displayed relatively low affinity for rat glucocorticoid receptors ($\leq 8\%$ of that of Dex) in a cell-free competition assay. Nevertheless, one compound, dexamethasone 21-(β -isothiocyanatoethyl) thioether (Dex-NCS), appeared to be an affinity label by virtue of its ability to block the cell-free exchange binding of [³H]Dex. [³H]Dex-NCS was thus synthesized and reacted with cell-free receptors to give, after analysis on denaturing SDS-polyacrylamide gels, only one specifically labeled species at 98 kDa, which is the molecular weight of authentic rat glucocorticoid receptor. These data directly establish Dex-NCS as a new affinity label for glucocorticoid receptors. Data on the reactivity of Dex-NCS and the stability of [³H]Dex-NCS-labeled receptors suggest that a cysteine SH group has been labeled.

Introduction

Affinity labeling of ligand-binding macromolecules gives covalent complexes which have numerous applications and can be studied under a greatly expanded variety of conditions. In the case of steroid receptor proteins, affinity labeling has been used to directly identify on denaturing SDS-polyacrylamide gels the native, mutant, and proteolyzed forms of receptor in various states of biological activity, purification, and chemical modification.¹⁻⁸ The covalent binding of the affinity label to the receptor protein is preserved during virtually all manipulations and facilitates the identification of molecules associated with the receptor (ref 7 and references therein). A classical use of affinity labels is to identify the amino acids involved in steroid binding.⁹⁻¹² A specialized use is to obtain irreversible agonists and antagonists.¹³⁻¹⁷

Despite the numerous applications of affinity labels for steroid receptors, the number of practical affinity labels is quite small.¹⁸ This is not due to a paucity of methods for affinity labeling (for review, see ref 19). Rather, the

discovery of new affinity labels has been hindered by the fact that most suitably modified ligands have such reduced

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* Address correspondence to Dr. S. Stoney Simons, Jr., Bldg. 8, Room B2A-07, NIDDK/LMCB, NIH, Bethesda, MD 20892.

[†] Present address: Departamento de Química Organica, Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, Spain.